



EPISODE 48

GUEST: DOUG BENSON



“By Faith All Things Are Fulfilled”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

How can our emotions be both a strength and a weakness? Join Dr. Doug Benson as he explores the concept of weakness, self-improvement and empowerment through Jesus Christ, and how Moroni lays out a pattern for the Saints to become like Jesus Christ.

Part 2:

Dr. Doug Benson continues to explore Moroni’s treatise on charity and the warning signs for our days regarding anger, pride, and contempt.

Timecodes:

Part 1:

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Doug Benson
- 01:34 Dr. Doug Benson's bio
- 02:28 Religious coping
- 04:32 *Come, Follow Me* Manual
- 05:49 Ether 12:1-6 - Becoming like Jesus
- 08:32 "Is there more?"
- 09:40 Ether 12:4 - Hope for a better world
- 13:07 Protective factors and covenant confidence
- 17:08 Emotions are not facts
- 18:59 Faith is an action word
- 21:37 Dr. Benson shares a story about faith in an elevator
- 23:16 President Nelson on hope
- 25:23 Ether 12:13-15 - Mental health care
- 30:38 Dr. Satterfield teaches scripture searching
- 33:51 Weakness for our benefit
- 35:46 Dialectics: two opposing ideas exist together
- 38:15 Ether 12:27 - Centerpiece of doctrine
- 39:42 Ether 12:27 - Accepting reality
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- 46:03 Dr. Manning and negative self-talk
- 48:47 Fight, flight, or freeze
- 51:11 Emotion can be strength or weakness
- 54:20 Act opposite to become like Jesus
- 56:34 Ether 12:27 - God in the moment
- 59:16 Living in the past
- 01:02:42 Shame and guilt
- 01:04:18 Hiding vs making things public
- 58:33 End of Part I - Dr. Doug Benson
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Part 2

- 00:00 Part II - Dr. Doug Benson
- 03:22 Loving yourself
- 07:08 Ignore the haters
- 08:28 Faith involves action
- 11:14 Opposition between things
- 13:22 Pride, envy, and contempt

- 15:39 Ether 14:25-15:19 - Anger leads to destruction
- 17:14 Ether 15:22-25 - Drunken with anger
- 18:25 Acting in faith vs acting on emotion
- 19:37 *Star Trek* or Harry Potter analogy
- 22:55 The Wise Mind and handling anger
- 27:50 Ether 15:16 - Radical Acceptance
- 30:41 He comes to himself
- 32:04 Adversarial relationships
- 35:35 Mindfulness and not acting on negative emotion
- 38:33 Becoming a peacemaker
- 40:27 How does the Book of Mormon compare?
- 45:51 End of Part 2 - Dr. Doug Benson

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Biographical Information:



Doug Benson is a licensed clinical psychologist. He specializes in empirically supported interventions, with a Linehan Board Certification in DBT. Doug received his master's in psychology at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky. He went on to get his Doctorate in Psychology from Pepperdine University. His initial training was in personality and neuropsychological assessment, as well as the

treatment of the severely mentally ill, with an emphasis on complex trauma and borderline personality disorder. He completed an internship at Utah State Hospital (USH), where upon completion, he took a job. Doug was there as an inter, postdoctoral fellow, and staff psychologist. In 2016 he started a small private practice specifically providing Dialectical Behavior Therapy and treatment for trauma. From 2010 to 2020 he was the Director of Psychology. USH until he left to dedicate all his time to the treatment of emotion dysregulation at Decision Tree Mental Health in 2020. More recently, he has left Decision Tree Mental Health, returning to USH as a staff psychologist, continuing to focus on treatment for the severely mentally ill.

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Ether 12-15 Part 1

GUEST: DOUG BENSON



- Hank Smith: 00:00 Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I'm your host and I'm here with my sure and steadfast co-host, John Bytheway. John, that is Ether 12:4, sure and steadfast.
- 00:19 Now, John, we are on our third lesson in the book of Ether. We've had a great experience so far. What are you looking forward to in this final lesson?
- John Bytheway: 00:29 We feel bad for Moroni having to, let's see, I'm going to write about the destruction of my people. Then I'm going to abridge an account of the destruction of the Jaredites. It's interesting to hear his voice and also is it fair to say a little bit of insecurity? The Gentiles are going to mock at what I'm writing is this man that had to take over his father's life's work.
- Hank Smith: 00:50 Yeah. I wonder if he feels a connection to Ether as they both watch the destruction of their people. John joining us today is a very good friend of mine. His name is Dr. Doug Benson. I call him Doug, but he is a doctor. Doug, as you've looked into these chapters, what are you looking forward to?
- Dr. Doug Benson: 01:12 The thing that stuck out to me with Ether Chapter 12 is the concept of weakness. This is the process of self-improvement, empowerment through Christ, Moroni lays out a pattern for us to incrementally become like Christ and like our heavenly Father.
- Hank Smith: 01:28 John, Doug has never joined us before. He's very accomplished. Why don't you give us a bio before we get started?
- John Bytheway: 01:38 Yes. Dr. Doug Benson is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in the treatment of emotion dysregulation and the provision of a dialectical behavior therapy or what they call DBT. He graduated from Morehead State University in Kentucky with a master's in psychology and then went to Pepperdine in California and received a doctorate in psychology.

	02:01	Before we started recording, we were talking about your daughters and their mission.
Dr. Doug Benson:	02:06	My daughter, Scout was called to the Jacksonville Florida Mission. My other daughter Ruby put in her papers. She just went into the MTC and she was called to the Jacksonville Florida Mission and we'll have an overlap of mission presidents, so that's unique.
Hank Smith:	02:23	Very. Hey, I knew your sister. Welcome.
John Bytheway:	02:28	Dr. Benson. I understand you have a fascinating PhD study.
Dr. Doug Benson:	02:30	I worked at a place called the Union Rescue Mission, which is a rescue mission in Downtown LA specifically with the homeless population down there. I was a therapist and we did a study where we looked at what kind of religious coping people used in the homeless population and there was positive and negative religious coping .
	02:53	Positive was usually when you would have a benevolent view of God and what God does in your life and that you attributed all the good things to God. Negative religious coping was usually more blaming, more negative attributes. Because the Union Rescue Mission was a Christian facility they had a program where they would mentor and do addiction treatment for people who were on the streets and that was the reason they were on the streets. The finding was that people in a homeless population use both, highly. It's like the idea of do all you can and then turn it over to God.
	03:33	Some people fall further into the do all you can part. Some people fall into the turn it over part more within the homeless population. They used all of those pretty intensely. The hypothesis was that homelessness is a traumatic experience. Typically, when you're in some situation where you can solve a problem, there's some leaning into the idea of, I'm going to do whatever I can and turn it over to God. Sometimes you have no control over the situation. The tendency is to lean into, I can't do anything about this, so I'm just going to lean in and have faith, which is nice. It leads right into what we're talking about.
Hank Smith:	04:17	Yeah, that's fascinating. I was interested when Doug first told me about that research. Doug has a soft spot for people who are suffering.
Dr. Doug Benson:	04:25	Yeah, I'm probably going to cry.

Hank Smith:	04:27	Yeah, and that's a gift by the way. That is a gift. Let me read from the Come, Follow Me Manual . I'm excited to follow you through these chapters. The lesson is entitled By Faith All Things Are Fulfilled. It starts this way.
	04:49	"Ether's prophecies to the Jaredites were great and marvelous. He told them of all things from the beginning of man, he foresaw the days of Christ and the Latter-Day New Jerusalem and he spoke of hope for a better world, even a place at the right hand of God. But the Jaredites rejected his words for the same reason people often reject the prophecies of God's servants today because they see them not. It takes faith to believe in promises or warnings about things we can't see. Just as it took faith for Ether to prophesy of great and marvelous things to an unbelieving people. It took faith for Moroni to trust that the Lord could take his weakness in writing and turn it into strength. It's this kind of faith that makes us sure and steadfast always abounding in good works being led to glorify God and it's this kind of faith by which all things are fulfilled."
	05:40	Wow. That's a great kickoff to this. Doug, what do you want to do first?
Dr. Doug Benson:	05:44	When I was reading through this, the first thing that popped out to me were the first six verses. How this chapter and the gospel in itself and what's in this chapter, I think the kids are calling it Meta. It's very parallel-y. John talked about this a little earlier about Moroni reading about Ether and Moroni searching through Ether's writings and these plates. He comes to this point where we hit Chapter 12. He's describing what's going on, but it's like he takes a break. He pauses.
	06:17	This is what I'm learning. These six verses where it leads up to Verse 6, specifically when he breaks off. To me, it was like Moroni is receiving personal revelation right now about what he's reading. Elder Scott said, "If you want to talk to God, you pray and if you want God to talk to you, you search the scriptures."
	06:39	That gave some gravity, even more gravity to this is that this isn't Moroni's going to teach a sermon, but even the way he talks about weakness, it's more like a personal revelation to him on how to tackle this, this thing that he's experiencing.
	06:57	I'm reading about this guy Ether, this prophet of God. I'm sharing the same experience with him. My dad shared the same experience with him. How did he cope with it? He describes

Ether. He could not be restrained because of the spirit of the Lord, which was in him. He describes how he did this, faith.

07:22 The information we're going to get in Ether 12 is personal revelation to Moroni on how to handle his own insecurities and how to become like Christ, do the things he sees Ether doing.

Hank Smith: 07:28 Yeah, that's fantastic. As a religion teacher at BYU, this is what I want to have happen. They're reading scripture, they're writing, that turns into an experience with the divine. My students push back all the time. "Don't make us write. Don't make us write. I don't mind reading, but don't make me write." But the process of reading and then what was he doing, condensing, abridging, this story. You're absolutely right there. All of a sudden he stops and says, Now I Moroni. I'm going to talk about this for a second."

08:05 What's fascinating to me is that his father did the exact same thing in Helaman Chapter 12. He just stopped and said, "Let me write." You've hit the first principle here, which is study scriptures write about what you're reading and personal revelation opens up.

Dr. Doug Benson: 08:25 It reminded me of a talk [Elder Scott](#) gave in 2009 where he talked about receiving revelation. If you remember, he was in a Sunday School class. He felt the Spirit. He felt like the things that were being talked about were important, so he started to write them down. Then he talks about pausing and asking, "Is this everything? Am I supposed to receive more?" Then he received more, so he wrote it down. At one point he said he'd left the class because he wanted to be able to have some quiet and wrote more down.

09:05 He clarified one of his current assignments. I like how you added that. I don't think I'd thought about the idea of writing. When you said that that even brought more things back to my mind about how I learn and how I receive revelation. Writing things down and then being willing. That's going to be something you see throughout this chapter.

Hank Smith: 09:21 And it's difficult. It's a little easier to sit down and read scripture, but then to pick up your pen and write or pick up your phone or your keyboard and start to type out, it can take us to a new level.

John Bytheway: 09:34 I've always noticed Verse 4 where he says, "Whoso believeth in God might with surety?" Sure love the surety part, the strong

faith, hope for a better world, and I thought, "Yeah, Moroni is seeing this world. Ether was seeing his world and there was no, it's too far gone." But when you believe in God, you can hope for a better world and it even sounds like it's a spirit world type place. Even a place at the right hand of God. My current world, I can't fix it, but I can hope for a better world. That will be an anchor for me.

Dr. Doug Benson: 10:05 In this chapter or in his revelation, weakness is the problem he's trying to address. The solutions are hope, faith, charity, even before that, humility and grace.

John Bytheway: 10:19 Doug, we've talked about other scriptures that talk about charting a course and having a sail and a destination. Here's an anchor, this time [Harold B. Lee](#) said something about the importance of faith in an anchor. He said, "The time is coming and facing you right now. You young people when except you have the testimony of certainty that these things, the gospel, the church and so on are true. You'll not be able to weather the storms that are going to beat upon you and try to tear you from your moorings today. But if you know with all your soul that these things are true, that we have been talking about, you will know who Jesus your Savior is, and who God your Father is. You will know what the influence of the Holy Ghost is. If you know those things, you will stand as an anchor against all the storms that shall beat upon you."

10:42 Some of these seagoing type metaphors, there's the idea of being tossed about, but if you have moorings and an anchor, then you can be firm and steadfast like we've talked about here, an anchor to the souls of men and we're going to need something like that.

Hank Smith: 11:20 I remember once I was up fishing in Alaska, I didn't realize how much the tide goes in and out of this bay that we were in. I figured it stayed relatively the same. That's what happens at Utah Lake where I'm from. One morning I went out, there was a buoy out in the water and it looked like it was going to be... like it was sinking. I'm like, "What's going on?" They said, "Oh, that's the tide going out," and I said, "It's a lot of water going out of the bay."

I remember Jimmy Rosenbrook was his name, he was our captain. He said, "The water going in and out of this bay every day is like draining Lake Powell seven times, in and out." At that moment, I saw the importance of an anchor, like a solid anchor or else you're going to end up far away. It's not like you'd move

a couple of feet. We would end up miles and miles away from where we were.

Dr. Doug Benson: 12:20

The interesting thing is these things are interconnected. When we talk about faith and hope, the combination of these two things, hope is when we have a light, when we have something to look forward to. When there is something, protective factors are family connections, religious beliefs are also a protective factor. Going back to dissertation stuff, it might depend on what your beliefs are, how you interface with religion or with your faith and which faith you are, how strong that is. That is also a protective factor because when we talk about hope, hope is the ability to see the promises that have been given to us.

[Elder Soares](#) talked about having Covenant Confidence. There's that interchange again between faith and hope. Faith is to me, and it's not a complete definition, but it's what comes to my mind is faith is behavior based on this hope that we talk about and that's where it gets cyclical. When we act on faith, it increases our hope, which increases our faith or ability to act in righteousness. Covenant Confidence is, oh, I've been given these promises, I've made these commitments and when I keep these commitments I'm supposed to get these promises, but I don't know that I'm going to get those.

Hank Smith: 13:48

Yeah, I don't see them, right.

Dr. Doug Benson: 13:51

I don't see them, they're not in my hands and I'm going to act on faith as if I have those. When people lack hope, then they lose purpose and they start to lose an understanding of meaning like, why are we here? The old missionary questions, why are we here? Where are we going? The answers to those questions are important because they provide hope.

Hope is important because it allows us to act on faith or behave effectively and I would suggest that this chapter is the chapter of hope. That's why it's in here. He talks about hope in this verse. He sandwiches this idea of weakness with hope and faith because hope and faith are the answer to overcoming our weakness.

Hank Smith: 14:41

I'm reminded of that classic movie, [The Prince of Egypt](#). "Though hope is frail, it's hard to kill." I hope that's true. I'm sure there's many of our listeners who listen to this, Doug and think, that's me. I'm running out of hope. I like what you said there. Maybe we could say, okay, with this small amount of hope that you have, maybe you could do a small act of faith. Hopefully, like you said, it's cyclical. It will build.

Dr. Doug Benson: 15:13 What you just said, that reminds me of Alma 32. Alma 32 is a wonderful behavioral experiment because Alma says, "Let's say you have a seed. You don't even have to hope for everything. You just have to have a seed. And if you plant that seed right there, just planting the seed is behavior. You have done something. But if it's a good seed, then it'll start to grow, but you have to continue in the experiment. You have to water and you have to nurture, and as you do that, it continues to grow. The first sprout..." as he says, "is evidence. Evidence will increase hope, which then by that will also increase faith."

We'll be like, hey, look, I planted this and what it's actually going to grow and because of that it makes us want to water it more and the eventual thing is fruit. We get to partake of the fruit of this tree that we've grown through, this bouncing between hope, faith. Within dialectical behavior therapy,

16:17 we're going to talk about this skill which I'll talk more about like that with weakness, but the idea of just because I feel a certain way or think a certain way doesn't mean I have to act the same way. Emotions and thoughts are not facts about the world per se. They're just a piece of information. Even if I lack hope, even if I could muster up just a little bit, what is something that I see that I can act on, that it may be in complete opposition to way I feel or think about it, I might get that evidence.

Hank Smith: 16:57 This might be a silly example, but my son, Mason, loves to go to the gym. He's become a gym rat. Sometimes he'll want to go and he'll look at the clock and think, "Oh, I don't have time to go," and I'll say, "Well, why not?" And he'll say, "I like to have 90 minutes." He said, "I only have maybe 45." We've come up with a little phrase that's, "Look, any workout is better than no workout."

I thought that it's probably that same thing with faith because you said you don't have to hope for everything. You don't have to just say, I'm fully invested in this. Maybe it's just any act of faith is better than no act of faith. It reminds me of President Benson's quote, "The Lord is pleased with every effort, even the tiny ones in which we strive to be more like him."

I might be talking to a youth or even an adult who struggles with addiction or some sort of sin that they think, "As soon as I get past this, then I can talk to God." I would say, "Even if it's a tiny bit of effort, just a prayer in your heart that's better than waiting."

John Bytheway:	18:11	<p>I remember Stephen Covey working with somebody and his strategy to get them out of where they were stuck was, "Make a promise, keep it. Make a promise, keep it," and it was as simple as getting up in the morning at a certain time. That created some momentum. I like what you said, Doug, about faith is acting. I know Elder Bednar talks about, Joseph Smith did not pray which church was right. He said, "Which church should I join?" It was an act of faith to join it.</p> <p>Maybe that's what real intent means when we talk about sincere heart but real intent. I really intend to act in faith, so I like that. I'd never thought of that before. How did you say it, faith is action?</p>
Dr. Doug Benson:	18:55	Yeah. Faith is behavior.
John Bytheway:	18:57	Faith is behavior because you're going to faithfully do something.
Dr. Doug Benson:	19:00	Yep.
Hank Smith:		In fact, we use the term have faith when we might change our vocabulary, right Doug, to act in faith-
John Bytheway:	19:10	Or move forward with faith.
Hank Smith:	19:12	... faithfully.
Dr. Doug Benson:	19:13	<p>Yeah. I think that's why those things are the way they are. If you go way back to the lectures on faith, Joseph Smith basically makes this point. He says, "Faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual." For the Savior, I said, "Truly that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but he goes on and even basically says, "Everything we do is the result of faith." I brush my teeth because a dentist has told me that then my teeth won't rot and I won't have cavities. I didn't do any research. I'm not Googling all the articles. Let's see what kind of empirical research there is on dentistry.</p>
	20:05	<p>My brother's a dentist and he just said, "Brush my teeth because it's better," and I'm like, "Okay." I have faith in him and because of that I don't have cavities. When we talk about this kind of faith, we're talking about faith in Jesus Christ. We're talking about faith in the promises made. That's what Elder Soares was touching on. It's like we make these covenants and we don't see the fruits of those. Maybe not even in this lifetime, we don't see the fruits of those.</p>

20:20

Covenant Confidence comes from behaving in accordance to those promises. That's hope. I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if my teeth are going to rot out, but I'm just going to have faith, I'm going to brush. I think that's the power in hope. It gives us something to have faith in.

I remember in graduate school because it was a religious school, most of the other students had some kind of a religious background. I was the only LDS person in my cohort. We'd get in these energetic discussions about doctrine and things like that and I remember being on the elevator with one of my cohort and he said something about blind faith and I was like, "I don't think there's any such thing as blind faith. You have to know something to be able to act," and I just remember this burned in my head. He's like, "No, that's the whole thing of faith. You don't know anything," and then he got off the elevator and the door's closed. I was like, "No way. There's more. You're missing it."

Back to the lectures on faith. We can't have faith in God until we understand his character.

Hank Smith: 21:40

How do we even know what we're supposed to do?

Dr. Doug Benson: 21:44

You have to have a seed to be able to have hope and then to have faith.

John Bytheway: 21:50

[Elder John H. Groberg](#) said once, "That the basis of all righteous hope is in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." When I started thinking about the things I hope for most, they are things like I want to see my parents again. I want to be with my family forever. I want there to be life after death. All of those things come down to what Jesus did. I want hope that my mistakes can be forgiven. All of them come back to my hope in Christ. I hope my football team wins. That one doesn't, but all of the biggies.

Dr. Doug Benson: 22:26

[Elder Andersen](#) talked about hope in the most recent general conference. The thing that actually struck me was a footnote in his talk where he quotes then I think [Elder Nelson](#) but President Nelson in a BYU devotional from 1995 and he said, "Have you noticed in the scriptures that hope seldom stands alone? Hope is often linked with faith. Hope and faith are commonly connected to charity. Why? Because hope is essential to faith. Faith is essential to hope. Faith and hope are essential to charity," which Moroni gets to later in this chapter. He goes on to say, "They support one another like legs on a three-legged stool. All three relate to our Redeemer. Faith is rooted in Jesus

Christ hope centers in his atonement, charity is manifest in the pure love of Christ. These three attributes are intertwined like strands in a cable and may not always be precisely distinguished. Together they become our tether to the celestial kingdom.

John Bytheway: 23:35 I feel like some of our greatest definitions of faith are here, in Moroni 12:6 and then the footnotes, Hebrews 11:1 and Alma 32:21, which you just mentioned. It's a hope for things which are not seen. It's a hope without a ton of evidence is the assurance or the substance of things hoped for the JST changes it to assurance. Yeah, things not seen. When you have faith, you hope for things which are not seen, which are true. They all have that common element in it. When you see those really powerful verses about faith, it was fun to see that they're all in the footnote of Ether 12:6.

Hank Smith: 24:13 It seems to me in Verse 5 that Ether is prophesying great, marvelous things, but nobody is acting. They don't see it first. It's almost like show me the plates then I'll believe, instead of I'll do the work to get to the evidence.

Dr. Doug Benson: 24:32 As we move into 13 through 15 too, and maybe Moroni is trying to punctuate that point that nobody's listening. It isn't that Ether. If you look in the beginning of Chapter 13, he goes into Ether even talked about New Jerusalem. These guys know these guys have all the information. They're not acting on it.

Hank Smith: 24:55 Before we move on from this topic, and John and I know on your mind every week is a listener out there who is in a dark place, who is losing hope. As you might guess, I'm sure that hope and faith are fading both together. Let's speak to those people for just a moment and I hope if you're out there listening, if you're feeling this way, that you'll stay with us here as we talk about just a little bit of action.

Sometimes, don't you think both of you, that we can ask people, we can overflow them with things they have to do and maybe you're in a dark difficult place, If you could just say a prayer, maybe it's been the first prayer you've said in months or years. What are your thoughts, both of you?

Dr. Doug Benson: 25:43 Maybe a two-pronged to that question. If you are feeling or have the thoughts about self-harm, I would encourage you to seek professional help, but people who specifically specialize in the treatment of suicidal ideation. Just like any medical treatment, mental health treatment has specific ways to address that. There's a hotline you can call 988 and they can

give you tips or things to think about. Then I love the idea of acting opposite to that urge on faith, that it can be different.

The other thing to that is if you know someone or you're interacting with someone that you feel might be in danger, true ministering is the best intervention. I worked with somebody who made up their mind. They had a plan and everything. They said, "Okay, well, today I'm going to go to school and if someone says hi to me, I won't..." By divine intervention, somebody said Hi, and they thought, "Okay, well there is something out there so maybe I will try. Maybe we'll see what happens."

That's where I will suggest ministering is being like Christ, saying hello to people, being kind, having charity making space for people.

Hank Smith: 27:11

Thanks Doug.

John Bytheway: 27:13

Doug, I like that you referenced Alma 32 where at first he says, "If it's a true seed," and then he backs off a little bit and says, "Even just a good seed. Maybe you can't go to the place where it's true, but can you accept that it's good. Even if you can no more than desire to believe. That's a step too. Then let that desire work in you until you can give place." It's one of my favorite phrases in there, "Give place," kind of a willful suspension of disbelief. I'm going to, "give place" that something good, something hopeful might happen and see what God can do when you, "give place" and then act and move forward.

But boy, what you said about just saying hi, what a simple thing all of us could do. I'm reminded of [Sister Michelle Craig](#) who was in line at a store. Do you remember the story Hank and something said, look up from your phone, and she started talking to the guy that was buying cat food and then he kind of let it slip, "It's my birthday." Then she had a chance to say, "Hey, happy birthday. That's wonderful," and everything, and had she not looked up from her phone, she wouldn't be able to do that.

Dr. Doug Benson: 28:18

The idea is to let yourself be a tender mercy. In this chapter, we'll talk about grace, the idea of the Lord's intervention. If we are listening and following the Spirit in our own lives, then we can, not just receive tender mercies but be someone else's tender mercies.

Hank Smith:	28:38	That's almost, or I would say even better than receiving those yourself that you get to be one for someone else. I encourage my students at BYU take out your AirPods because they walk with their head down their AirPods in. I even want to show them the 1980s when people had their eyes up and they were looking at each other. Maybe that's part of our epidemic of loneliness. Dr. Martin we've had a couple of weeks ago, he said, "We've never been so connected, yet so lonely."
John Bytheway:	29:18	I can't tell you how many times I've said something to someone and they go, "What?" You know they have to pull something out first because they didn't hear what I said.
Hank Smith:	29:30	Thanks for that, both of you. I just hope anybody out there listening know you are loved even though it might not feel like it right now, you are, you are loved. Like Doug said, get help, move forward. It's in small little steps the Lord will be there for you.
Dr. Doug Benson:	29:49	I know you've had Bruce Satterfield on the show. He was teaching at Rick's College when I went to Rick's College. Then he went to BYU. When I went to BYU. Bruce Satterfield, basically he taught me how to search the scriptures. I remember in one class he had us read this verse, whoever read it as they said, "Weaknesses," and he said, "Okay, well hold on though. Let's look at this word, weaknesses. Does it say weaknesses? It doesn't say weaknesses. It says weakness," so let's read the verse verse 27.
John Bytheway:	30:26	Ether 12:27, "And if men come unto me, I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me. For if they humble themselves before me and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."
Dr. Doug Benson:	30:46	If it's not weaknesses, then what is the singular, weakness, and then he left it at that and said, "Go figure it out." I had to go on this journey of figuring out why it has weakness instead of weaknesses and came to the conclusion that what he's talking about is our humanity, our fallen state. If you chase the scriptures, you can find other places where people say the same thing. Paul says the same thing about his infirmity. I think the Brother of Jared talks about the same thing, when he is asking for him to touch the stones and he says, "Because of the fall of our natures, we become evil continually." Even Nephi also alludes to this when he's talking about, "Oh, wretched man that I am. Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh." There's this

idea that our weakness is our humanity. It's our physical body. It's being in this carnal state.

- Hank Smith: 31:55 The natural man, King Benjamin would say.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 31:58 Yep. I love this because this also is to me a seed. Sometimes as humans, we have this tendency to see things in black and white. Our brain is built to do that. Our brain is built to say, oh, fire bad. Don't touch fire, danger. Put these things in boxes, keeps us safer. When we talk about weakness, when we talk about carnality, when we talk about our physical body, you'll get these discrepant messages. The natural man is an enemy to God. That is true. But then we also read in Corinthians that our body is a temple. To me, suddenly I've got this hope. Based on, we're all on a level playing field. This is a common thing that everyone has is this weakness and it's not necessarily a curse. It was given to us by God.
- Hank Smith: 32:53 Now, I give unto men, I didn't say I cursed men.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 32:57 We have weakness. In fact, I would suggest that we have this weakness to our own benefit as he goes on and says, "I give it to you so that you could be humble. If you're humble, my grace is sufficient for you." I think there's two parts there. When I think about what our brain does, we have our emotion center in our brain, the limbic system. Our emotions are hardwired. We all have emotions, and I'm setting this up because the next three chapters talk about emotions, a lot.
- 33:31 A lot of times people, they understand this concept of emotions are hardwired. We have emotions, but then they also have these beliefs about emotions that would suggest they are bad. Being angry is bad. I shouldn't feel this way. The problem is you're going to. You're going to feel all the waves because they're hardwired, they're there. In fact, it's been given to us. Why do we have that weakness? Well, because without that weakness, we wouldn't have a vehicle to become like our Heavenly Father. We wouldn't be able to build the characteristics necessary to be with Him.
- Hank Smith: 34:13 This mortal body, this fallen nature comes with emotion and those emotions are going to come with urges that I need to control or learn to act on, learn to not act on.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 34:48 We'll even read when we get into Ether within the same verse, it talks about how Coriantumr's people and Coriantumr are full of anger, all of the wickedness is because of their anger. And

then it'll say, "The wrath of God was unleashed on them." Okay, well wait a minute. Those are both words for anger.

34:52 It comes down to this idea in [DBT](#) that we'll talk about with dialectics. It's the idea that two opposing ideas or two opposing truths can exist within that same moment. So the idea that we can both have a weakness that is both detrimental to us and a positive to us, that's not a foreign thing in the scripture. You can either partake of the fruit and you shall die, and I also want you to multiply and replace the Earth and they're both true.

Justice and mercy are two opposing things. How can you be 100% just? How can you be perfectly just and perfectly merciful? Those two truths, those things need to be reconciled in our minds. That's where hope comes from when we talk about weakness and this process that he's going to describe on what to do with weakness because oh, I'm not a bad person. Oh, I have this emotion. Oh, I'm not a bad person. People have emotions. What do I do with it now? We go back to this acting in faith. Now what do I do with this emotion?

Hank Smith: 36:10 I really like that Doug, and to me that goes back to our previous discussion that this weakness is a gift. Oh, well, that gives me hope that I'm on the right track just because I'm feeling these emotions. It seems like that Moroni is feeling a little bit of shame in these previous verses, "Oh, I can't write. I'm terrible at writing," and yet that's a good thing in a way. It's leading him to something.

Dr. Doug Benson: 36:41 Well, it leads him to understanding faith, hope and charity. That's the idea. Jared, super powerful when I read it and I look at Reformed Egyptian and I'm also kind of clumsy and I don't get the same thing from what I'm writing. I'm going to ask the Lord if He's going to be able to fix this for me.

How's this even going to work? Right there, he's humbling himself and the Lord answers his prayer. Grace is sufficient for him because of his humility and his faith. He had to actually pray. He had to talk to God about this.

Hank Smith: 37:20 You said Verse 27 is the centerpiece where the Lord teaches the doctrine, but we can see this play out in Moroni's exchange here.

Anyone listening who thinks, I'm not good at that, I am not even close to that person. Those moments of, oh, this is what Moroni is going through. That happens whenever I'm around, John

Bytheway. I am not as nice. I am not as kind. I am not as funny, and the Lord would say, if you'll be humble, I can turn those things you lack into strengths.

Now, both of you can answer this. I don't think the Lord is saying, I can take your weaknesses and make them strengths, but he's saying, I can use your weakness, your mortality to your advantage.

Dr. Doug Benson: 38:16 Yeah. I think that's where I go back to this idea of we can't become like God without this weakness because we make mistakes. We humble ourselves. Faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hank Smith: 38:33 Which wouldn't have been part of our life had we not.

Dr. Doug Benson: 38:37 Yeah.

John Bytheway: If we jump ahead to Verse 37, I love this statement and because this is what the Lord said to Moroni, "Because thou hast seen thy weakness." We could ask the question, what would prevent you from seeing your own weakness, seeing your fallen state? "Because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shalt be made strong." And then remember an anchor to the souls of men so that what they might with surety hope for a better world, even a place at the right hand of God. And this says, "Because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shalt be made strong even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." If we have weakness and we see it, that's good.

That's what I'm getting here. And if you're not seeing your weakness, that's not good, but if you see your weakness, you have hope to sit down with the Father one day.

Dr. Doug Benson: 39:32 I'll talk about this in terms of understanding and accepting reality, things as they are in the current moment. That's what we're describing here. You have accepted reality as it is Moroni, and because you have done that, you can now move forward in faith. Many times I have not accepted reality as it is. I looked at things the way that I wanted them to be or I saw things the way I think they should be. The problem we want to solve that we think we know the solution and we just move forward like we know what we're doing.

In that case I'm not focused on reality. I'm not aware of my weakness. That my plan or my solution isn't the actual solution.

Therefore, I don't see the fruit of my faith. I have faith in my own wisdom rather than in the way things really are.

Hank Smith: 40:24 What would be an example, Doug, of someone rejecting reality? Because Moroni is accepting reality. This is what it is and the Lord says, "Good, good," so what would be the example? What would Moroni say or anyone else say to reject reality?

Dr. Doug Benson: 40:40 I would say perfectionism is a way that people reject reality. The Lord is saying, "Hey, guess what? You're not perfect. In fact, you were built that way. You were built imperfect." Oftentimes we will reject that reality or we'll pretend we're not supposed to be this way. We're not supposed to be weak and people read this scripture, "I will not be weak anymore when I have done this process, when I have faith, I'll no longer be weak." But the Lord is saying, "I will make it strong." He's not saying I will take it away.

Even when we go back to Paul, we mentioned earlier, Paul never had his infirmity taken away, whatever it was. He doesn't say what it was, but it was never removed from him because my suggestion or my thought would be that it is part of his mortal life. It's a weakness that he has or it's weakness in general.

41:41 A lot of times people reject reality in this, even within the scriptures and they use, they wrest the scriptures to justify the idea that they're supposed to be perfect now, "Be therefore perfect even as I am." That scripture becomes something that people beat themselves with because they reject the reality that they're not perfect and that actually they won't be in this life.

42:06 It's like one of those dual prophecies when we talk about, "Then I will make weak things become strong unto them through grace." So the dual prophecy is I will actually change you now in small ways, small and simple things, line upon line, precept on precept, you'll become a little bit better here and there as you follow this process and then I'll resurrect you. Then your weak thing will no longer be a weak thing. It will be perfect and immortal. That's the promise.

Hank Smith: 42:40 You're hitting it. Very relevant topics today. Put it on your therapist hat here, and let's say there's a listener out there who really struggles with perfectionism. I know it's pretty prevalent. Walk us through in therapy terms how someone might reject reality and how they can use this, what you've been teaching us.

Dr. Doug Benson:	43:04	We go back to this idea of dialectics . Two things that might coexist, that go together are this idea of acceptance and change. They seem like opposites, but oftentimes even within this verse, we have to accept that we are weak, which then allows us to act in faith, so that's acceptance and then acting in faith is change. That's how I might talk about this, right?
	43:28	It's like, well, it might be that you need to accept there are certain things that are currently happening in your life that you don't like. There might even be things about yourself that you don't like that you need to accept, but they need to be things that are actually real. I can't accept something that's not real because it's not real, so if I'm like, I'm a horrible person, well, I can't accept that because that's not reality. The Lord don't make no joke.
	43:58	But I can accept, oh, things aren't the way I want them to be right now that allows me to move forward. When we talk about perfectionism, I'm not this thing. Whatever the bar I've set myself for and my acceptance of reality is like, okay, I'm not this thing, that's true. That's the reality that I exist in right now. I can do this or I can do this. Oftentimes people get stuck in this dichotomy of I'm perfect or I'm a failure. It's not a real dichotomy. That's not how we exist. It's more of like, what can we do that's going to work? What's going to be the most effective? You said earlier, the Lord loves effort. If we're moving forward, we're accomplishing maybe what we can rather than what we think we are supposed to.
Hank Smith:	44:49	I'm not perfect and God loves me.
Dr. Doug Benson:	44:54	Yeah. I'm not perfect and I'm good enough.
John Bytheway:	44:58	When Dr. Craig Manning was here and he talked about people's negative self-talk, to stop himself and say, is that accurate? Because like you said, somebody saying, I'm a failure. They're probably succeeding at a number of things, but they had one failure, therefore I'm a failure. Come on is that accurate? I always mess up. Oh really? do you always or did you mess up this one time? Back off a little bit and ask yourself, is that really accurate?
Hank Smith:	45:25	Yeah. Is Moroni accepting reality when he says, "I'm not that great at writing given my situation," but he doesn't say, therefore, I'm the worst person ever. I can't be helpful.

Dr. Doug Benson:	45:41	Or I'm going to quit.
John Bytheway:	45:42	Yeah, yeah. I'm glad he didn't quit.
Dr. Doug Benson:	45:46	Yeah, me too. We wouldn't be here right now.
Hank Smith:	45:49	If I'm struggling with perfectionism, you're telling me to accept the fact that I'm not perfect right now, and in fact the Lord has no expectation of that because He says right here, "I gave you your imperfection."
Dr. Doug Benson:	46:04	Yeah. When you talk about that, John, the idea of evidence when looking for evidence in DBT that we call that checking the facts, is where we try to look at our thoughts and our emotions and see if they actually are consistent with the context that we're in. That's another way to do that. Is this reality? kind of an idea. Does my emotion fit the effects? Because emotions are hardwired. We have our learning history. We can have an emotion that might not fit the current context. It doesn't fit what's actually going on.
	46:39	That's where I go back to this idea of weakness and emotions. We have emotions and the emotion doesn't necessarily have to be a fact about the world just because I feel a certain way that isn't a fact about the world. It's a piece of information that my brain is giving me. Same with thoughts. Just because I think something doesn't mean it's a fact about the world. We think about hundreds of things a day and a large portion of them we ignore because they're not pertinent or we've learned just through our experiences to pay attention to certain ones and not certain ones. That can be helpful and that could be harmful.
	47:18	The idea of checking the facts would be checking to see whether my emotion fits the context, whether my thoughts are fitting the context, whether the intensity of my emotion fits the context. How long has this emotion been here? Does that fit the context? Each emotion Hank referred to has an urge that's hardwired to it. I've heard previous people talk about fight or flight.
	47:42	When we feel fear, we have a built-in urge to run away or to put up our dukes and fight, or to freeze, the deer in the headlights. For a deer in the wild, the most effective thing they can do is sit still. Prey's not going to get them most likely if they just freeze. The problem is when you're on the freeway and the headlights are coming at you, freezing is not an effective response.

Hank Smith:	48:15	You talked about fear. Let's say my son is past his curfew. Therefore, I'm thinking in my head, either he is out there doing something terrible so I'm angry at him or he is hurt, so now I'm scared and I'm fearful and I start planning his funeral in my head and what I'm going to say. You're saying I should stop and go check the facts. He's just not home.
Dr. Doug Benson:	48:44	Yeah. I might ask, what's the likelihood that any of those things are currently happening? There's a possibility. There's a difference between a possibility and a likelihood though.
Hank Smith:	48:54	Is this what people do when they tell themselves stories without having facts, my friend doesn't text me back, therefore he's angry with me. I've planned all that I'm going to say because he's not a good friend and then he says, oh, I'm sorry. I was in the temple. That's why I didn't text you back.
Dr. Doug Benson:	49:11	Yeah, I don't have signal. I was in Costco.
Hank Smith:		I didn't check the facts.
Dr. Doug Benson:		Two hours of suffering I could have avoided by checking the facts earlier.
Hank Smith:		I like that.
John Bytheway:	49:22	I like that too. Why assume the worst? I have used that on myself. Most likely it's this. Being able to say, well, those things are possible. That's very unlikely that it's that that helps me to calm down.
Hank Smith:	49:39	Doug, if I have a symptom of something, if my body's hurting, I probably shouldn't go online and read that symptom because I might end up with I have four or five fatal diseases.
Dr. Doug Benson:	49:52	Yeah, you've caught WebMD.
Hank Smith:	49:56	I know that you have a tendency to do that. I'm going to go online. I'm going to read about this and oh no, I have cancer. For sure I have cancer, right?
Dr. Doug Benson:	50:06	That's where I might go like, okay, what's the likelihood that this is the thing. That also goes to where we go back to this balance idea or these dialectics. Sometimes our emotions and our thoughts are accurate and we need to do something with that. We don't want to ignore our emotions. That's where we go back to this idea of this weakness is also strength. That's how it

becomes a strength because we love our children. That's an emotion.

50:34 Anger protects us, fear protects us, we need that emotion. That's maybe another way to think about this idea of I make weak things become strong, in that, yes, our natural man is a weakness and it is also through the grace of Christ, it's made strong. It's something that can be helpful because he's going to go on and talk about charity, which is love.

Hank Smith: 51:00 So far, Doug, you've walked me through how to come out of a hopeless state. You've helped me understand why to accept the things that are real, accept reality. I am not as funny as John Bytheway, and that's okay.

John Bytheway: 51:20 Funny looking, right.

Hank Smith: 51:22 What do you want to do next?

Dr. Doug Benson: 51:24 When we talk about weakness, you mentioned Mosiah 3:19 as the natural man. If you look at that, "The natural man is an enemy to God and has been from the fall of Adam." Another indicator that this is a broad thing. It's not a specific, oh, no, I have bad penmanship and "Will be forever and ever unless he yields unto the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a Saint through the atonement." And then he gives all these things to do.

I like the term or the phrase, "Putteth off the natural man." He doesn't say get rid of the natural man. He doesn't say eliminate the natural man. He doesn't say don't have it. It says, what you need to do is put off the natural man, become submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love.

52:20 All of these things that we already talked about, this acceptance of reality, the humility, we're humble, we're more teachable. That's what he's describing here, but he's saying to do that, "We need to put off the natural man through the enticings of the Holy Spirit." Rather than when I have an emotion saying, I need to get rid of this emotion or I need to get rid of this urge that I have. It might be more about I need to put it off. I need to act opposite to it depending.

We talked about this idea of checking the facts. If my emotion makes sense, if it's a piece of information to act on, if I'm a deer in the woods and there's a bear, I need to freeze, but if I'm a deer on the freeway, I need to run. It might be that when we

have these urges, we put off the natural man, we act opposite to those things is what we would call it.

Hank Smith: 53:15 What does that mean, act opposite? So I have a natural urge, do the exact opposite of that natural?

Dr. Doug Benson: Or do something that would replace it. Usually our urges are there to help us resolve whatever the emotion is. Feeling afraid so I run away so that I won't be afraid anymore. Let's put that in real context though. I get asked to speak in stake conference or I get asked to do a podcast. We're back to Meta. Suddenly we're noticing fear. We have this emotion of fear and my fear is going to tell me that I should run away.

Hank Smith: Tell him, no.

Dr. Doug Benson: 54:58 Sorry, stake president, I will be out of town that weekend. Say, no, I can't do this. If we check the facts, what's going to happen if I speak in stake conference? What's the worst thing that could happen? Well, the worst thing is that I get up and I stumble, and then it's over. Probably not going to die. It's not going to kill me to speak in stake conference.

54:17 What's more likely going to happen? Well, it'll be a learning process. I'll get something out of at least preparing the talk. Even if I do stumble, we go back to this, be the tender mercy. Maybe somebody will get something out of what I said. I'm going to act opposite to my emotion, which is I'm not going to say no, and I'm actually going to throw myself all the way in, act in faith. I'm going to write my talk. I'm going to stand up there and I'm even going to feel fear up there. Now, that being said, that's probably one of the hardest things I've just described to somebody with social anxiety.

54:55 They're thinking, well, what was that? That was the sound of thousands of people switching to Taylor and Tyler, right, as soon as I said that.

Hank Smith: 54:59 What was that I heard, no one's listening anymore.

Dr. Doug Benson: 55:03 It's a hard, hard thing to do. That's why the other part of this verse is that my grace is sufficient. We're back to comfort. These are things that we might need to do that are different. We might need to act in faith. You act on our hope. That would be opposite action, right, it's behavior. But don't worry, my grace is sufficient for you when you do that thing. You'll see it sprout. It's going to come forward.

- Hank Smith: 55:32 If I'm in a fearful place, the stats of young people and even adults who deal with anxiety seems to be increasing, and again, it might be a medical issue like you talked about earlier, but I'm feeling this anxiety, this fear, acting opposite to it would be turning towards this thing that I'm afraid of and doing the exact thing I don't want to do.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 55:57 Yeah, it's really probably one of the hardest things to do. When I talk to people about this, I'm very upfront about this is difficult. I can't get around difficult. The only way around difficult is through, and the comfort is that you're not doing it by yourself. Doing it is going to increase your ability to become like your Heavenly Father in the long run. In the short run, you'll be less afraid.
- Hank Smith: 56:28 Yeah, you'll see you can do things. You can do things you never thought you could do.
- Hank Smith: 56:32 If you don't mind, I want to go back to Ether 12:27 because something happened to me recently that I hope was being led by the Spirit. I had a student ask me a wonderful question, very sincere question. He said, "I'm not doing well in school. I'm studying really hard, not getting the grades I want." Getting C's when he wanted to get A's. He said, "So I've been putting God first," and then he referenced this verse. Basically asked the question, when does my weakness become a strength? And I think what he meant was, when do I start getting these A's that I'm supposed to be getting?
- I think it was the Holy Ghost that gave me an answer. I've never given this answer before to any question. I said, "What if you never get the A's you are thinking of, but 20 years from now, your daughter says, 'Dad, I'm so dumb, everyone around me is getting A's, I'm not. What's wrong with me?' And now you can comfort her in a way you couldn't have before. Is that the Lord making your weakness your strength?" I think he both liked my answer and didn't like my answer. I think he thought, oh yeah, that's a good thought, but wait a second, I want my good grades. Do you see that in verse 27 that maybe we expect a certain strength to come?
- Dr. Doug Benson: 58:05 Yeah. That leans into another thing we'll talk about, the idea of mindfulness. We have a tendency to want to be in the past or the future when really God is ever-present. Oftentimes we think about God is ever-present means that God is always around us, but I like to think about it that God is always in this moment. Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose in the present moment. We get hung up on this future thinking about

expectations. We usually don't have the information to be able to be accurate in that. I don't know what my life map is, I have a thumb sketch. So when I try to figure out exactly what's going to happen in the future and I make plans, I get stuck because the journey isn't what I think the journey should be. The idea is that we let go of this assumption of how things will work out and do what's effective now.

- Hank Smith: 59:09 What would it look like for someone to live in the future? Is that what you mean, they're constantly thinking of how things should be?
- Dr. Doug Benson: 59:16 Yeah, "I did this thing God, so I should get A's." The Lord knows what's going to make us or help us become what we can become, fulfill our eternal potential and we don't.
- Hank Smith: 59:29 That's fascinating. Yeah. And what would be an example of someone living in the past?
- Dr. Doug Benson: 59:34 The emotion of sadness comes from living in the past or anger can come from living in the past. We're going to read about that, like Coriantumr. There are all these wars based on things that happened, "You killed my brother and you did this thing to me." We live in the past instead of the current moment. The past comes and crushes the current moment. We can't really enjoy or be effective in the current moment because we're stuck.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:04 My wife and I are both stressed, we're busy, we've got five kids, all of whom seem to need something at all times. I'm frustrated. Can you walk me through that? There's so many listeners going, "Oh yeah, that's me. Oh, that's me too."
- Dr. Doug Benson: 01:00:20 Well, first what emotion is frustration?
- John Bytheway: Unmet expectations?
- Hank Smith: Yeah.
- Dr. Doug Benson: Yeah. I would ask myself, does this fit the facts? Why am I frustrated? Does the frustration make sense? Are there good reasons why things are happening the way they are that might reduce my frustration or my anger? And I might say, "Well, I am frustrated by this part of it and this part might not fit the facts. The intensity of my emotion is too intense for the situation." But being frustrated makes sense because I wanted things to be this way and they're not. Then I might move into problem

solving and have a conversation with my wife about that thing. Too often we value short-term reinforcers over long-term reinforcers. Meaning, "It's late, I'm going to go for peace now, maybe we'll talk about it later." But then we never talk about it later.

Hank Smith: 01:01:21 Okay.

Dr. Doug Benson: 01:01:24 We've gone for the short-term and that might mean saying, "Hey, there's something going on. Is there a way we can fix it? Is there something? Let's discuss it." And then sometimes if we get to the point, like I'm frustrated and it doesn't make any sense or it doesn't fit the context. Then it would be I'm just going to act opposite to this. And that's not the same as stuffing it down. It's acting opposite in a way that will change the emotion. So I would say, "I'm going to take a time out. I'm going to gently avoid this person."

And by gently, I mean I'm not going to stomp off, I'm not slamming doors. Because those are anger behaviors, that's acting on anger. Instead I'm going to take some quiet time and go, "Okay, I need to calm down." And then, because emotions are not necessarily just behaviors, they're a full system response, I might have thoughts that are going to keep the anger going. Even if I go take a break in my room and I'm sitting there thinking about how they've wronged me and how terrible they are, and then we're back to Coriantumr in a few minutes, then my anger's going to stick. So I'm going to have to sit and think about real good reasons why things are happening the way they're, why it might be this way, just to bring that anger down. And then go do something nice, have charity.

Hank Smith: 01:02:42 Doug, I'm really enjoying this little exercise we're doing. Let me give you one more. Let's say I'm in church and a wonderful, well-meaning, member of my ward is bearing a testimony or giving a talk, telling the congregation about how wonderful their family is, how their children have all been obedient, and this never happens in my ward, and I'm sitting there going, "My life is not that way." So maybe I'm feeling ashamed of my family. Maybe I'm feeling some sadness.

Dr. Doug Benson: 01:03:18 When we talk about shame specifically, shame is an interesting emotion. People think about shame in black and white terms like it's bad all the time. But it's hardwired, so there must be some effective reason to have it. It can be pro-social. There are probably things that we shouldn't do in public. And I think shame and guilt get confused. Guilt is the emotion we have when we've done something that goes against our values, when

we've done something against our morals. Shame is more of when you're going to be rejected by people that you care about. You might ask yourself, what's happening because of my family? Are people rejecting me because of my family? Are people not talking to me because of this? Or am I being kicked out at church? If the answer is no, then shame does not fit the facts. I would act opposite to that.

01:04:18 And the urge that usually comes with shame is to hide. When something we've done is shameful, we just hide it and cover it up. We don't want anybody to know about it. And the opposite of that is to make it public. Usually when people actually do that, people don't respond the way they expect, which is further shame. They're like, "Oh, how can we help?" We move past the veneer that we might show people and we allow them into our lives. Sometimes shame fits the facts. If I get up and say certain things in testimony meeting, it's likely people will ask me not to bear my testimony again. It's not public appropriate, so that's why people don't get up and confess their sins at the pulpit because that's not where that happens. So we want to problem solve. We might change our behavior, do things differently based on that emotion.

Hank Smith: 01:05:11 Yeah. And maybe anger for that person that did that. And I don't need to act on that either. The person up there speaking, I don't have to hate them because of what they said.

Dr. Doug Benson: 01:05:22 Or hold bitterness in my heart or stop coming to church or those things. Because that doesn't really do anything to that person, it doesn't make their family different. It has more impact on me.

Hank Smith: 01:05:34 I like the way these principles could be applied to a myriad of situations. One thing that came to mind was there's a wonderful religion teacher at BYU, and I was sitting outside of his classroom waiting for him to finish so I could go in and teach. And he was talking about marriage and how he was being very open about some of the difficulties. He's been married 40 years. He said, "Have we ever gone to bed angry? Yeah, we have. I ever come to my bedroom door and found it locked? Yes, I have. Yes, I have." He said, "But she was so sweet, she set up my pillow and blanket." As you were talking, Doug, it reminded me of that. I liked the idea of I'm not going to try to hide the fact that we're mortal.



John Bytheway:	00:00	Welcome to part two with Dr. Doug Benson, the Book of Ether chapters 12 through 16 .
Dr. Doug Benson:	00:07	Moroni then comes down in verse 28. Leading up to weakness, he's talking about faith and hope, and he gives all these examples of people and how they have exercised faith. This is behavior. People do things, and because they have done things, they are blessed, things come to them. And they probably aren't blessed in ways they thought they would be blessed. So, Moroni gives us all these examples of how having hope and faith can help us to put off the natural man, and also accept the natural man, that we have weaknesses.
	00:44	But then he goes back to that. He starts coming back out of this chiasm where he starts to talk about faith and hope again, but he adds charity. Charity is an interesting attribute, because it's the attribute that is both necessary for and the result of. We have hope and faith and charity, which increases our hope and faith and our charity. And without charity, we are nothing. When we talk about weakness, part of putting that off is moving beyond our behavior, and seeking something that we don't have. We talk about charity as the pure love of Christ. As Moroni says later, I can't have the pure love of Christ on my own. I'm going to suffer here. Everyone is. We're weak. We just learned that in verse 27. We're all imperfect and we're all going to suffer here.
	01:45	We're also all going to feel joy if we are having faith in Christ, and hope, and then there's charity. I can't have the pure love of Christ, because I won't suffer everything. I can feel pain for other people, I can have empathy, but I think charity is different. Charity is a gift of the Spirit that we have to seek out, and almost apply for. In Moroni, he talks about how do you get charity? You pray for charity, because that's where grace comes in. That will be charity not only for other people, but charity for ourselves.

	02:23	In this context, when we're talking about Moroni, it's charity for himself. He's like, "I can't do this. I can't write. Nobody's going to know what that means." The Lord isn't telling him just to have charity for the Gentiles, you need to have charity for yourself. "You have weakness. I gave you this weakness on purpose, so that you could be humble. By being humble, then you can access my grace." Which then now we're back into this iterative cycle that Elder Renlund talks about. Faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost. We have hope, we have faith, which is a behavior, and I would suggest repentance is faithful behavior, it's changing in the direction that would get us closer to God. That helps us to overcome weakness. It makes weak things stronger, because we've increased just maybe that much.
Hank Smith:	03:22	I really like this. I've never seen that in this chapter before, where the centerpiece is Moroni struggling with his own lack of ability. He is abridging the book of Ether here, and maybe he comes to this, "Oh, this is really going to help me overcome what I'm struggling with." I think everything we've talked about today is so relevant. Elder Uchtdorf said "it may seem odd to think of having a relationship with ourselves, but we do. Some people can't get along with themselves." Makes me laugh a little bit. "They criticize and belittle themselves all day long until they begin to hate themselves. You are endlessly compassionate and patient with the weaknesses of others. Please remember also to be compassionate and patient with yourself." That's what the Lord does. He allows me to be... My grace is sufficient. You can love yourself with the weakness that you have.
Dr. Doug Benson:	04:25	Yeah. Nobody knows my weakness better than the Savior. Going back to Alma 7:11-12, He has suffered everything. He knows me better than I know myself. If I'm praying for charity for myself, who is going to be able to give me that gift more appropriately than the Savior? Because He has suffered everything that I have suffered, and knows exactly how I feel. He's the only one who knows that, and the only one that can except for the people who pray for charity, and that's where He goes to. "What are the Gentiles?" He says. "You don't need to worry about the Gentiles. You can pray for the Gentiles, that they might have charity, or pray that you would have charity for the Gentiles."
John Bytheway:	05:14	Yeah, I was just looking at verse 36. "I prayed unto the Lord that He would give unto the Gentiles grace that they might have charity." I see a real human side of Moroni here at the end of verse 25. "I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words." He's thinking of people reading this book, what, a millennia later?

Hank Smith:	05:34	Yeah, yeah.
John Bytheway:	05:35	He's not even going to be here, but he feels the weight of his assignment so heavily that what if they mock our words? Mockers mock, that's what they do. We'll always have that, which is, to the next verse, "Fools mock, but they shall mourn. My grace is sufficient for the meek. They'll take no advantage because of your weakness."
Hank Smith:	05:57	Yeah, look at that. "I fear" that the Gentiles are going to mock these things. Then you go over to verse 36. I'm praying, please give the Gentiles grace.
John Bytheway:	06:08	"That they might have charity." Yeah.
Hank Smith:	06:10	Yeah. The Lord is interesting in His response. "That doesn't matter. You love yourself, right? Doesn't it feel that way?"
Dr. Doug Benson:	06:18	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	06:19	You got to not worry about them. And later on, doesn't Mormon quote his father writing to him? "Nevertheless, notwithstanding <i>their</i> weakness, let <i>us</i> remain faithful." Stop focusing on what they're doing, maybe?
Hank Smith:	06:35	John, I love that. I don't know if I've ever seen this chapter this way, that Moroni is becoming quite vulnerable.
John Bytheway:	06:43	Yeah. And I've wondered if it's, "This was my dad's life's work. This wasn't my life's work. All of a sudden, now it's in my lap, I'm worried I'm going to do it right." Maybe that's what's happening there?
Dr. Doug Benson:	06:55	And he's also alone.
John Bytheway:	06:57	Yeah. Which doesn't help.
Dr. Doug Benson:	06:59	Yeah. That's where we go back to this idea of where he identifies with Ether, because Ether is living in a cave.
John Bytheway:	07:07	That's true.
Dr. Doug Benson:	07:08	He's trying to teach us a thousand years, or however long, to have faith and charity with ourselves, have faith and hope. Even though we have weakness, really, it's the Lord is teaching him the same principle, because he's alone. He's like, "I'm despondent about this thing, my work. Is this going to be

something that's effective or helpful for people in the future? Or are they just going to make fun of it?" And the Lord uses that example to teach us these principles.

Hank Smith:	07:42	I really like that the Lord doesn't say, "Oh, they'll love it." Doesn't say that.
Dr. Doug Benson:	07:48	Exactly. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	07:49	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	07:49	He says, "That doesn't really matter, does it?"
John Bytheway:	07:53	Yeah.
Dr. Doug Benson:	07:53	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	07:55	Before you read verse 30, had you ever heard of Mount Zerin?
Dr. Doug Benson:	08:00	I had not.
John Bytheway:	08:02	You know why? It was removed.
Dr. Doug Benson:	08:09	Oh, that is perfect.
John Bytheway:	08:11	So I guess the brother Jared did remove it.
Dr. Doug Benson:	08:13	Yeah, he must have.
Hank Smith:	08:15	I'm interested in how Moroni finishes this chapter. He says, "I've only written a few of these things because of my weakness in writing." He brings it up again.
John Bytheway:	08:26	There it is again.
Hank Smith:	08:27	We get it, yeah.
Dr. Doug Benson:	08:28	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	08:28	"And now I would commend you to seek this Jesus." That's behavior. You said every one that he listed did something. It wasn't like the force of Star Wars, they didn't just have faith, they acted in faith. Is that the same invitation here? Do something.
Dr. Doug Benson:	08:46	It's a very shorthand way to say all the verses there where I just talked about stuff, do that. Look for the seed, what is your hope

in? Act on faith, and through the grace of Christ, your weakness will be made strong. Before we move on, I've been talking about this idea of dialectics. It's very similar to the doctrine of opposition, the idea of opposition in all things, to act or be acted upon. When we talk about opposition in all things, we are focused on maybe opposition between things, good and bad. True, not true. Reality, not reality. Sometimes I see things more about opposition within things. That's this idea that we are natural men and we are spiritual people. Sadness and joy can coexist. Anger and love can coexist. There's opposition in those things, but there is opposition within, meaning that we don't necessarily want to get rid of either one of those. They can both coexist. Don't eat the fruit, multiply and replenish the Earth. Justice and mercy. You're saved by grace after all you can do.

10:06 There's this idea, or this opposition, that is within things, rather than just between things. Opposition between things requires discernment, being able to discern between truth and error, while opposition within things requires us to maybe see the necessity and benefits that exist in both sides of that. You've had to choose between good things, two good things. One with maybe a greater long-term purpose. Living in the garden is not a bad thing. Moving forward is also not a bad thing. It lends itself back to that idea of weakness. Not a bad thing, but there's an opposition in it.

Hank Smith: 10:53 Sometimes we spend a lot of time and energy fighting something that's not terrible.

Dr. Doug Benson: 10:59 Yeah. We need to find the truth in the thing.

Hank Smith: 11:02 Yeah, find the truth of it. I really like that, because then I can actually deal with something I've accepted. We can't deal with something I haven't accepted is true.

Dr. Doug Benson: 11:14 If I look at verse 27 with opposition between things, weakness needs to be resolved. I have to get rid of weakness, because weakness is bad. But opposition within is I can accept my weakness and recognize that I need to act in faith and move forward to change what I can.

Hank Smith: 11:38 Is this like sending a child on a mission? You just did that. I'm both sad and happy.

Dr. Doug Benson: 11:43 Yeah, definitely. [Elder Uchtdorf](#), in his most recent conference talk, talked about being sad and having joy at the same time. I

miss my daughter, oof, and I wouldn't want her to be anywhere else right now. Opposition within.

- John Bytheway: 12:00 Hank, you've heard me use the phrase "a sermon in a sentence", and here's one in verse 32: "man must hope". That's something to mark. Hope rests in Christ. All the things I hope for, the most important things, all are possible because of Christ, so I like that.
- Hank Smith: 12:17 "Man must hope" "a more excellent hope". I love it. Doug, we've had you for a while now, and we've spent a lot of it on... Well, we spent almost the entire time on Ether 12. Which deserves it, by the way, Ether 12 is a standout chapter in the Book of Mormon. But you have alluded to what we're going to talk about in these last three chapters. You've talked to us about emotions, and it seems that, in these last three chapters, there is no check on emotions. They don't check the facts, they just act, especially in anger. With the lens that you have from your experience, how did you see these last three chapters?
- Dr. Doug Benson: 13:01 Most of their behavior and what they do seems to be driven by intense emotion; anger, fear, shame, guilt. And there's very little checking in with what they know from Ether.
- John Bytheway: 13:17 It sounds like they're just downright insane for the rest of the whole book.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 13:22 You look at these people acting on the intensity of their emotion. Anger is a fact to them, vengeance is a fact. You kill one person, and then we need to have an entire war based on the death of my brother, and then we need to have an entire war because I envy something you have. I don't have this, I need it, or I want it, so we're going to have a big war. Secret combinations throw in, that's all about pride. The emotion of envy, the emotion of contempt or disgust for other people are driving these people's behavior.
- 13:59 They have opportunities to change their behavior, but instead they build up their army. Coriantumr gets wounded, he has two years to think about it, and what does he do? He probably sits and ruminates on the thing that makes him angry, why he's justified in his behavior, and why he should be doing what he's doing, why this war makes sense, and then he acts on it. You end up in this state because they do not put off the natural man. There's no check.

Hank Smith:	14:28	This is what happens. The emotions keep escalating on both sides.
Dr. Doug Benson:	14:34	Becoming one is his doctrine, he goes on to say in 3 Nephi. And if you look in Ether 14 , Moroni says they were divided. Part of them fled to the army of Shiz, and part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr. A very stark black and white division in that way is not the doctrine of Christ.
Hank Smith:	15:02	You generalize. It's an easy way to put someone in a category.
Dr. Doug Benson:	15:04	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	15:05	"I don't have to think anymore, once I put you over there."
Dr. Doug Benson:	15:08	If you go back to when he talks about there is opposition in all things, he says that if there wasn't, then we wouldn't be able to compound them into one. I would suggest that's an idea of opposition within. If you can't recognize these two opposing things, you can't bring them together. Work together, not be divided, not judge each other, not act on anger. That's what contention is, it's acting on the emotion of anger.
Hank Smith:	15:36	Yeah, so it's not terrible to feel angry.
Dr. Doug Benson:	15:39	It's not wrong, I would say. It's weakness, but sometimes we need it. The example I often give, anger has motivated some of the most helpful change in the world, right? Like I said earlier, within this scripture it talks about they were acting on their anger of 14:25. "Thus we see that the Lord did visit them in the fullness of His wrath, and the wickedness and the abominations had prepared a way for their everlasting destruction." That's interesting, too. "Their wickedness and their abomination had prepared a way for their everlasting destruction." It doesn't say, "And then the Lord destroyed them."
Hank Smith:	16:23	Their acting on anger, yeah, destroyed themselves.
Dr. Doug Benson:	16:26	Even earlier in this chapter, he talks about there was a great curse upon all the land, and he says, "Because of their iniquity, if a man should lay down his tools, or his sword upon his shelf or upon the place whither he would keep it, behold: on the morrow, he could not find it, so great was the curse upon the land." It doesn't say that God cursed the land. What it says is the natural consequences of, I'm going to say it as a psychologist, right? The natural consequences of acting on anger, or acting on any emotion ineffectively, are this. If I just

let envy and anger and all that run wild, people are going to try to steal all my stuff all the time. The only way I'm going to be able to keep it is to just sleep on it.

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| Hank Smith: | 17:14 | It says in 15:19, "the Spirit of the Lord ceased striving with them. Satan had full power over their hearts. They were given up to hardness, blindness. They're going to be destroyed." Even verse 22 is quite an interesting verse. They were drunk with anger, "even as a man who is drunk with wine". |
| John Bytheway: | 17:36 | When I've taught this, Hank, I've asked my class, describe someone who's drunk. They don't have situational awareness. They don't know where they are. They don't make good decisions. Like you were saying, this is nonsense. Why would they behave this way? You go down to verse 23, the armies have a count of 52 left on one side and 69 on the other. Don't you think, at that point, you'd say, "There's a lot of land here. Why don't you guys go that way and we'll go this way?" But they sleep on their swords, it doesn't make any sense. And then at the end of verse 25, now there's 32 of them and 27 of us. Don't you think at that point you'd say, "Let's go!" |
| Dr. Doug Benson: | 18:14 | Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 18:16 | But "the Spirit of the Lord ceased striving with them." They're drunk with anger. We read it and we think, "This doesn't make any sense. Did people really get that far gone?" |
| Dr. Doug Benson: | 18:25 | Way to think about it is if we go back to the natural man aspect, emotions are hardwired, and we've talked about the urges that come with emotion. Here we're back at opposition within. I don't want to freeze in front of the car with headlights, but my brain takes over at certain points. The way I think about it is if I'm hiking in the woods and a bear jumps out, I don't want to have to sit and think about, "What would be the best thing to do right now?" I could do a pros and cons on to run or not to run; by then, I'm a snack. |
| John Bytheway: | 19:02 | Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 19:04 | So, it's a good thing that I have- |
| Dr. Doug Benson: | 19:05 | Yeah. Our brain is built to shut off our cognitive functioning, like our executive functioning part of our brain, to keep us alive, and I would suggest that in this case, this people may have just shut it off. Their anger was so intense. That's maybe a natural consequence of letting your emotions run you, is that you have |

		a harder time thinking, making different decisions, acting on faith.
John Bytheway:	19:37	Speaking of Mr. Spock, this is illogical, right? You called it cognitive function. They're going, "It was overcome by anger." I love the way you said that, was, "Wait, what would be the best thing to do right now?" Nobody was asking that question.
Dr. Doug Benson:	19:55	Nobody was. They were all drunk on their anger. They were no longer Spock. Or not even close to Spock, they moved all the way over to Bones. "You cold-blooded green-"
John Bytheway:	20:05	"Darn it, Jim, I'm not a warrior."
Hank Smith:	20:06	Yeah.
Dr. Doug Benson:	20:06	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	20:08	Doug, let me ask you a quick question before I keep going into these chapters. I've heard you teach a principle you call wise mind. I would love our audience to hear that.
Dr. Doug Benson:	20:17	John brought up Spock, so here we go. But this idea of opposition within our dialectics, is this idea that we can have these two opposing things that coexist. One of those is our emotion mind, where we get stuck in our emotion, and if they run us, we have a really good example of what that looks like. We're impulsive, we're hot, we don't care about logic, we just kind of move out of that. But if we're all the way over on the other side of that, and we're in our reasonable mind, Spock was never a happy guy, because he was too logical, right?
Hank Smith:	20:54	Yeah.
Dr. Doug Benson:	20:55	All that mattered to him was the facts. All that matters in this reasonable mind is what's logical, which leaves out a lot of stuff. Charity is not a logical thing. Sometimes love is not logical. A wise mind is this synthesis of those two things. It's being able to see the benefit within our emotion, and the benefit within our logic or reasonable side, and synthesizing those in a way to move forward effectively. So, it might be saying, "Hey, he killed my brother, and that makes me really sad, and I wish he wouldn't have. And I'm also pretty angry. It makes me want to just go to war with him, but I don't think I'm going to go to war, because then all these other people would die, including my brother, so instead I might do something wise mind, which is middle ground, and say, 'Hey, I don't like that. We're going to go

this way, you go that way.'" Kind of like John was saying, kind of the Kirk thing.

- Hank Smith: 21:51 Yeah, that's interesting. I've heard you talk about that before, that Star Trek, for anyone out there who was born in the 1900s, who knows what this is, has those three characters that represent those three.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 22:04 Yeah. You've got your Spock as your reasonable mind, you've got your Bones as your emotion mind, and then Kirk tries to bring those guys together. He takes what they're both saying, and put them in something, a package we can all listen to. The younger people that are listening, you might be thinking about Hermione is the reasonable mind in Harry Potter, and Ron is the emotion mind, and Harry would be the wise mind trying to put it all together. It's a concept that goes back through time. Yin and yang, opposition.
- Hank Smith: 22:35 I really like that, because that's something I can use in my life. Sometimes I'm too emotional, and end up getting into trouble, and sometimes I'm too logical, I'm not thinking about anybody's feelings, just facts, where I like the idea of balance and blend, and let there be tension between the two. Don't let one take over.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 22:55 Yeah. And when we talk about it, we'll talk about wise mind as this innate thing that everybody has. It's this innate wisdom we all have. We're talking about, maybe, the light of Christ. The ability that we have to make wise decisions, they exist there, we have that power. And in the case of these people that we're reading about, they have let their emotions and the things that are happening around them drown it out.
- Hank Smith: 23:24 They let one side take over, this emotion mind. If you feel it, act on it. So, Doug, one of the reasons I invited you on when I read these chapters, I feel bad that I read these chapters and thought of you.
- Dr. Doug Benson: 23:41 Wait a minute.
- Hank Smith: 23:42 Yeah. You help people deal with anger, or manage it. Not, like you said, get rid of it, because it can be a helpful emotion. Walk us through what you do with patients who are struggling with acting on anger, because I know anger has destroyed marriages, anger has destroyed parent-child relationships, work relationships. Pretend you have a lot of clients in front of you right now.

Dr. Doug Benson:	24:15	Yeah, I need another four hours. I'm just kidding. A lot of it would be looking at some of the things we've talked about already. So, if we go to this idea that emotions can shut us down, or can shut down the pathway from our reasonable thinking to our emotional thinking and take over, sometimes you just need to do something that will bring down the emotion, so that you can think straight.
	24:43	John said being drunk with anger, you can't be undrunk because you decide to be undrunk; you got to wait for it to kind of wear off. You can't be like, "Oh wow, I'm really drunk. I should probably drive home though, so I'm not going to be drunk anymore." Doesn't work that way. They were drunk on anger. They couldn't not be drunk anymore. They would have to do something to bring the anger down, reduce the anger. I talked earlier about taking a timeout, or you can do some deep breathing that might calm you down a little.
John Bytheway:	25:16	Do a service project or something.
Dr. Doug Benson:	25:18	Do some type of service project, do something nice for someone, because that's the opposite of being angry, is doing something nice or being charitable. Then you can put yourself in a place to check the facts, and say, "Okay, does this anger make sense?" If it doesn't, "Oh, what do I want to do? Oh, I want to have two warring nations. No, not effective."
John Bytheway:	25:41	Not a great idea.
Dr. Doug Benson:	25:42	Yeah, let's do the opposite of that. Or, "I'm going to post this thing on Facebook or Instagram," or whatever your flavor of social media is. "Oh wait, what's that going to do? Is that going to lead to division? Does this fit the facts? No, it doesn't, so I'm going to act opposite. I'm going to do something different. I'm going to be a peacemaker." President Nelson defines specifically how to be a peacemaker, which would be opposite action for anger.
Hank Smith:	26:10	And I can see why you would say bring your anger down before you ask those questions, because if I'm really angry and someone says, "Does it fit the facts?" I'm going to say, "Yeah!"
Dr. Doug Benson:	26:17	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	26:22	Yeah, it does.
Dr. Doug Benson:	26:23	Coriantumr says, "Yeah, let's get them."

Hank Smith:	26:24	Where you're saying, let it wear off for a second before you start asking these questions. It reminds me of something our team member, the great Lisa Spice, sent me once. She said you need that gentle reminder that one time in the Bible, Elijah was so mad he said, "Lord, I want to die." So, God said, "Here's some food. Why don't you have a nap?" So, Elijah slept, ate, woke up, and decided things weren't so bad. Never underestimate the spiritual power of a nap and a snack. I'm sorry what I said when I was hangry.
Dr. Doug Benson:	27:01	Right. You were asking where do you go with that? That would be how you might act opposite, but you might need to solve a problem that's causing this anger. In these chapters, there's some things that you know it would make sense why people are angry. Someone killed my brother, someone stole all my stuff. It might be that you would think about effective ways to solve that. In our day, if someone came and stole all the stuff out of my house, I'm not going to track them down, I'm not going to go to their house and find them and take all their stuff back, I'm just going to call the police. It seems like a more effective, safe way to do that. It's problem solving, it's not acting on my emotion. If I get in a fender bender, I'm not going to get out and match the damage to the other person's car that happened to my car. That doesn't make any sense.
Hank Smith:	27:47	"Yeah, that'll show you."
Dr. Doug Benson:	27:50	The third thing that you might look at doing is we go back to this idea of radical acceptance. Sometimes, anger and bitterness and such continue because we're not willing to accept things as they are. If you look in Ether 15:16 , "And it came to pass that when it was night they were weary, and retired to their camps; and after they had retired to their camps they took up howling and lamentations for the loss of the slain of their people." There's this sadness that pervades, right? "And so great were their cries, their howlings and lamentations, that they did rend the air exceedingly. And then it came to pass on the morrow that they did go again to battle, and great and terrible was the day." This is this idea of accepting reality. Maybe the intense emotion that you're experiencing is because of what's going on.
	28:44	Oftentimes, we talk about this idea of accepting reality as a necessity to changing reality. If you don't accept that this sadness is a result of these constant wars, you're not willing to do something different. The next day, on the morrow, you'll get up and you'll just go to battle, because that's what we do. And then at the night, when you go back to bed, you'll cry and you'll

		be like, "Why is it like this? Why?" And then the next day, you'll do it over again.
	29:15	We've talked about checking the facts, and then deciding whether you need to act opposite to that emotion or problem solve it. Then sometimes, those might not work, and you just have to accept the reality of what is happening. Maybe that's why I'm having this emotion. That's the piece of information. I'm being given signals that I don't like this, and if I don't accept the reality of where I am... In Coriantumr's place, he starts to do that in the beginning of chapter 15.
Hank Smith:	29:47	He's starting to see.
Dr. Doug Benson:	29:49	Yeah. It's interesting too, because my son, Porter, we were talking about this, because thinking these things over. And he was like, "Yeah, and he repented." And I was like, "Well..." We had a little conversation about this, and so I had to reread some of this again and rethink about this. Did he actually repent? I think the emotion of guilt worked on him. He noticed. He gained awareness of his reality. He came to himself as another. He awoke and he rose from the dust, is another way to say that. That suddenly, "Oh, wait, look at all these people that are dead, two million of our mighty men, and also their wives and their children." He starts talking like he's having a Zeezrom experience. He was mourning and he couldn't be comforted. He's like, "Okay, I can repent of this. I can actually change my behavior."
	30:41	And he writes a letter to Shiz to try to solve his problem. Shiz says, "Sure, just let me cut your head off. I'll spare everybody." It's almost as if what Ether said, his prophecy, would be granted. Kingdom will be back. I think if he would've repented earlier, when he was told to repent, it would've been better, but still, all the people would've been spared if he would've sacrificed himself. And in comes the emotion of fear. And that's maybe an assumption, because he doesn't necessarily say that, but the behavior he engages in is right in line with urges for fear: run away. I don't know if I would say he fully repents. He comes to himself.
Hank Smith:	31:25	He starts to, yeah.
Dr. Doug Benson:	31:26	He has an awareness, but he doesn't accept the consequences that might come with repentance.
Hank Smith:	31:34	Oh, interesting.

Dr. Doug Benson:	31:36	You may even think about it like he fears the short term versus the long term. Even in this case, if Shiz kills him, and he's repented, what's the long-term outcome? He's saved in the kingdom of God because he's repented, or at least he'll receive more mercy in that case. I don't know. I'm not a judge, can't say. But instead he's like, "I don't want to die. I would rather wake up and cry, and-"
Hank Smith:	32:01	Go to battle again.
Dr. Doug Benson:	32:03	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	32:04	It's interesting, Doug, that I've met people like that, where most of their relationships are adversarial. There's no stopping and going, "Wait, what's going on here? How can I address this problem?" And just keep doing it every day. And, "I'm ruining all my relationships, left and right, and yet I won't stop and say, 'I need some help.'" I wanted to share a story, it's a very, very sad story, from President Monson, and then maybe have you comment on how we can save relationships, because that's part of what you do. This is President Monson , October 2009.
	32:43	"Many years ago, a young couple called my office and asked if they could come in for counseling. They indicated they had suffered a tragedy in their lives and that their marriage was in serious jeopardy. The tension between them was apparent as they entered my office. Their story unfolded slowly at first as the husband spoke haltingly, and his wife cried quietly. The young man had returned from serving a mission, was accepted at a prestigious university. In the university ward, he met his future wife. She was also a student at the university. After a year of dating, they journeyed to Utah and were married in the Temple, returning east shortly after finishing their school. By the time they graduated and returned to their home state, they were expecting their first child, and the husband had employment in his chosen field. The wife gave birth to a baby boy. Life was good."
	33:37	"When their son was about 18 months old, they decided to take a short vacation to visit family members who lived a few hundred miles away. This was at a time when car seats for children and seat belts for adults were scarcely heard of, let alone used. The three members of the family all rode in the front seat, with the toddler in the middle. Sometime during the trip, the husband and wife had a disagreement. After all these years, I cannot recall what caused it." That's President Monson. "But I remember that their argument escalated, and became so heated that they were eventually yelling at one another."

Understandably, this caused their young son to begin to cry, which the husband said only added to his anger. Losing total control of his temper, he picked up a toy the child had dropped on the seat and flung it in the direction of his wife. He missed hitting his wife. Instead, the toy struck their son, with the result that he was brain-damaged and would be handicapped for the rest of his life."

34:40 "One of the most tragic situations," he says he's ever encountered. "We spoke of commitment, responsibility, repentance, forgiveness. We prayed together." He says, "I have not heard from them since that day so long ago." And then he quotes, Doug, the scripture you quoted. "Verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, the father of contention. He stirs up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one toward another." My guess is that there are people all over who, in just a moment of anger, have destroyed what takes years to build. If there's someone out there listening, Doug, who really struggles with anger, first I think you've taught us accept that. Accept that, so you can do something about it. What would you say to do?

Dr. Doug Benson: 35:36 It goes back to this idea of mindfulness. Most people who know me have heard me say you can start today. In the case of this story, the impact of that would be long-lasting, and I would go back to this acceptance of weakness; recognizing that weakness can become strong, but only through, first, accepting that weakness. If I live in that moment, if I live in that car, the rest of my life will be about that car. Instead, I need to be here, where I am today, and address my anger now. President Monson talked about repentance, forgiveness, and these things that might focus on past behaviors and what we've done. Moving forward would be to focus on the present moment, focus on what's my current emotion? If I'm noticing anger, go back to those ideas of how do I intervene now? How do I not act on this emotion now?

36:40 Even in the story, I could hear, "Well, what would've happened if they would've addressed the anger at this point? Or at this point? Or at this point?" That's only as helpful as it informs the current moment. It might be focusing on, "Okay, I know what I've done in the past, and I don't like to repeat that, or I don't want to repeat that. I don't want to be the people in chapter 15 who wake up and do the same thing over."

Hank Smith: 37:10 They howl and weep at night, and then they go back and do the exact same thing.

Dr. Doug Benson:	37:18	Yeah. Everything I say is harder than it sounds. People are going to give you all these comments. "Oh, sure, just act opposite your emotion. Just have faith." We're reading it coming from two people who have gone through things that I can't imagine. "Oh, what? My entire civilization has been destroyed in front of my eyes in the most gruesome way I can describe?" And then Moroni reading about someone else's exact situation that he's going through, and he describes, "I have all these inadequacies, and this is how I feel about myself. I know that my weakness can become strong if I just have faith and hope and charity. If I just move forward, reminding myself that that is faith in Christ."
Hank Smith:	38:12	I really like that. Accept and then say, "I don't want this to keep happening. Therefore, what do I need to act?" Which is faith. "What do I need to do today?" And that's not something we address on the podcast very often, but it is something that's prevalent.
John Bytheway:	38:33	And in previous podcasts, we've talked about characters in the Book of Mormon whose intent is to stir people up into anger, remember how many times they used that phrase? "Stir them up to anger", to get their own ends. That ought to caution us. Is somebody trying to stir me up to anger? Is it myself? It's a good question.
Dr. Doug Benson:	38:54	Elder Bednar , in conference, talked about the Book of Mormon. In the beginning of his talk he said, "The Book of Mormon is not a history book. It's a book that predicts the current moment and the future." Our current times are filled with contention, divisiveness, and anger. People seemingly like loving and friendly people are angry about things on opposite sides of each other. A prophet of God talked about being peacemakers because we need to be peacemakers. That came at a very timely time. We thought there was division then, but it was a prophecy for us to say, "Hey, if we're working on this when he gave that talk, then we're prepared for the current moment."
Hank Smith:	39:44	I've never thought of it that way. It was a prophecy, 12 months later. Now we're going on two years later, and things have definitely escalated. I'm going to go back to his talk here. He says, "I invite you to examine your discipleship within the context of the way you treat others. I bless you to make any adjustments that may be needed so that your behavior is ennobling, respectful, and representative of a true follower of Jesus Christ. I bless you to replace belligerence with beseeching, animosity with understanding, and contention with peace." That's wonderful.

	40:27	Doug, you've walked us through these chapters, and honestly showed me things I had never seen before, that's how incredible this book is. Before we let you go, our audience would be interested in how the Book of Mormon holds up against all of your experience. Here you've studied out of the best psychological books, you've done the research, and here we have this Book of Mormon that you also have read and studied a lot. How do you see it comparing to what you've read? Does it keep up with some of that great writing?
Dr. Doug Benson:	40:59	When I was a deacon, I don't remember anything about this fireside I was at. They had a returned missionary, this guy who had gone somewhere, I remember he had a blow gun, so I'm assuming South America somewhere. It turns out he was a psychologist too, or he was going to school to be a psychologist. And I was, "Hey, maybe get some tips from this guy." The thing I remember him saying is, "Oh, becoming a psychologist can be hard, and you should read your scriptures as much as you read everything else." That's understandable, because there are some things that conflict with what we believe within psychology and social sciences. I try to do that, and I can say what the Book of Mormon is. It is the Word of God. It is true.
	41:48	And so therefore, the books I read, and continue to read, about psychological principles or behavioral principles, the true principles in those are already woven into the Book of Mormon. We tear this chapter apart, and within it I see, oh, these principles already existed. There's no discovery of a new way to look at thinking. It's more about true principles being revealed. I talked about Alma 32 as being a behavioral experiment. Those are eternal principles, they're not news. Even if we talk about them in more secular terms, true principles are true principles. The Book of Mormon is true, it's the Word of God.
Hank Smith:	42:41	That fits with my experience as well in reading. I'll be reading something that's groundbreaking in whatever field and I'll say, "Oh, yeah, that was in the Book of Mormon right there." I can reference something that the Book of Mormon taught.
Dr. Doug Benson:	42:55	You might have to do what Moroni does to get that. It might not just be on the surface. When you study the scriptures, those truths, those mysteries, are open to you.
Hank Smith:	43:07	There is a difference between studying and reading. Maybe that involves writing, to come full circle to where we started. Thank you for spending your time with us. I think our listeners will walk away going, "You've given me some things I can do to help

me in my own problems." That's the power of a good book and a good teacher.

Dr. Doug Benson: 43:26

Right.

Hank Smith: 43:27

So, with that, we want to thank Dr. Doug Benson for spending his time with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode, we remember our founder, the wonderful Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We are coming up to some of these final lessons in the Book of Mormon on followHIM.

43:56

Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website, followhim.co. That's followhim.co. On our website, you'll also find our two free books: Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else.

44:30

If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew: David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Sorensen.

President Russell M. Nelson: 44:51

Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. Follow Him.

CROSS MY HEART AND HOPE TO LIVE



- | | | |
|----------------|-------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:02 | <p>Hello everyone. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. This is where John and I share a single story to go with each Come, Follow Me lesson. John, we're in the last lesson of the Book of Ether, Ether 12 through 15, and I have a story for you. I think you've heard it, but for those who haven't, this is the story of all stories. President Nelson told this story about when he was a heart surgeon, a very good heart surgeon. He said he met with a stake patriarch down in Southern Utah and the man had a heart problem. This was 40 years ago, he says, during the pioneering days of heart surgery. He said, "This saintly soul was hurting because of his failing heart. He pleaded for my help." He said, "We did extensive evaluations and found that he had two faulty valves." I didn't even know my heart had valves, but okay.</p> |
| | 01:00 | <p>He said, "One of these we could fix with surgery, the other, we couldn't do it. We could not fix it even with surgery." He said, "So I didn't advise him to have surgery because I can only fix half your problem. You're still going to have this problem and now you're going to be recovering from heart surgery." He received this news, President Nelson says, of course, with great disappointment because that means he has a shortened life. He kept coming back, finally, President Nelson says, in desperation, he spoke to me, "Dr. Nelson, I have prayed for help and have been directed to you. The Lord will not reveal to me how to repair that second valve, but he can reveal it to you. Your mind is prepared." Then he said something, John, that no friend should ever say to another friend, "If you will operate on me, the Lord will tell you what to do." If someone ever says that to you, say, "I refuse." I can see a missionary companionship going, "Let's not go to the hospital. If you operate-</p> |
| John Bytheway: | 02:01 | <p>I'll care of it.</p> |
| Hank Smith: | 02:02 | <p>... the Lord will tell you what to do." He said, "Please perform the surgery." President Nelson said, "His great faith had a profound effect on me. How could I turn him away?" I'm thinking, easy. Just tell him, "I can't do it." But he said, "We both prepared for that fateful day. I prayed over and over again, but</p> |

still did not know what to do for his leaking tricuspid valve." Of course, leaking tricuspid valve, John, that's a pretty easy fix. He said, "Even as we started the operation," his assistant said, "What are you going to do for that?" And he said to the surgeon, can you imagine? "I don't know." I mean, this is incredible.

02:47 He says, "We began the operation, after relieving the obstruction of the first valve, we exposed the second valve." This is the one he doesn't know how to fix. "We found it to be intact but so dilated, it couldn't function as it should." His exact words. "While examining this valve, a message was distinctly impressed upon my mind, 'Reduce the circumference of the ring.' I announced that message to my assistant, 'The valve tissue will be sufficient if we can effectively reduce the ring towards its normal size.'"

03:25 And then he explains a little heart surgery to us, he says, "How was I supposed to do this? You couldn't have a little belt that goes around it like you would on a pair of pants. It'd be like the saddle on a horse, you couldn't cinch it up." Now, John, this is incredible. "Then a picture came vividly to my mind showing how the stitches should be placed. A picture came to my mind to make a pleat here and a tuck there would accomplish the desired objective." President Nelson says, "I still remember that mental image, complete with dotted lines, where the sutures, the stitches should be placed. The repair was completed as diagrammed in my mind. We tested the valve and found the leak to be reduced remarkably. My assistant said, 'It's a miracle.'"

04:22 John, do you know what heart surgery entails? They use a saw, like an actual electric saw. Just incredible. Well, Ether chapter 12, John, is about faith. And this one specifically, I know you know it, Ether 12:6, faith is things which are hoped for, not seen. Dispute not because you see not. For you receive no witness until after you start the surgery, until after the trial of your faith.

John Bytheway: 04:54 A lot of faith to say, "I don't know what I'm going to do, but I'm going to open this guy up anyway."

Hank Smith: 05:00 Now, we should probably say, do not try this at home.

John Bytheway: 05:03 Yeah.

Hank Smith:	05:05	When President Nelson said, his mind was so prepared, that's because he studied and went to medical school and had done this thing many times. But absolute incredible faith to move forward on a prompting to say, "I do not know how this is going to work out, but the Lord knows what he's doing." What is that that Nephi said, John?
John Bytheway:	05:26	"I was led by the spirit not knowing beforehand the things which I should do." Yeah.
Hank Smith:	05:30	Not knowing what was going to happen. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast, it's called FollowHIM. We're with Dr. Doug Benson this week, walking through these chapters. He's a psychologist and he gives us so many helps for regulating our emotions and helping our relationships. You're going to love it. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. Then come back here next week, we'll do another FollowHIM Favorites.